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THE CRUISE OF THE ANTI-TORPEDO.

[Being an account of the voyage of the last ship left to England after its conquest by Bismark & Co. (Limited); what she did, and what she omitted to do; and how she finally succeeded, single-handed (as a pawn regains a queen), in restoring the fallen fortunes of our beloved country.]

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

'Go on ahead!' cried our gallant captain.

'Go on ahead!' reiterated the call-boy in his shrill treble; and that noble monument of ship-building skill, the *Bella Donna*, sped swiftly seawards, leaving Old England behind her, perhaps for ever.

But was it the call-boy? It may be as well to state at once, that though holding an official position on board the vessel in question, I knew nothing of nautical affairs. Perhaps it was the cabin-boy. The reader must excuse all technical errors in this narration. My position was peculiar, if not unparalleled. A fortnight had elapsed since England's comb had been cut at Dorking, and my beloved country was lying beneath the iron heel of its German conqueror. Our entire fleet had been destroyed (as everybody knows) by torpedoes, with the exception of the vessel on whose books I had the honour to be enrolled as supernumerary mate. I don't know why I was so termed—I mean not as to the 'supernumerary' (for that was obvious), but as to the mate, concerning the nature of whose duties I was (and am) in a state of the most profound ignorance. But Captain Grimsby (since entitled by a grateful country Great Grimsby) was a strict disciplinarian, and had refused to receive me, although I was his own brother-in-law, except as a nominal member of the crew. He had declined to receive my wife, of whom, as his sister, he had naturally seen a good deal, on any pretext whatever, and I had accordingly left her, a prey, not to the invader, indeed, but to the landlady at South-end, in whose lodgings we had chanced to be when England's glory set on Dorking's plains. The circumstances of that event must be so fresh

in the memory of most of us, that there is no need to recapitulate them. A rapid summary will suffice. Our gracious Queen had been banished to Glasgow, where she was living in an upper flat, on a few pounds a week, and even that miserable pittance was paid in German money. Whatever may be said against our conquerors as being unforgiving or retaliatory (on account of our having sent food and stores to the French sick as well as to their own), they could not be accused of paying us back in our own coin for anything. They had already swept every sovereign out of the country, the absence of which was supposed to be compensated for by groschens and thalers of doubtful value and repulsive appearance. They took this money from no dishonest motive, as *die Zeitung* (once the *Times* newspaper) took pains to inform us, but merely as collectors of coin, in which (and especially in gold coin) they were very curious. They were much too high-minded to steal anything, but they exchanged goods, somewhat (or at least we English said so) to our disadvantage.

They took, for example, all the massive gold and silver plate from Windsor Castle and other royal residences, and also from the great City Companies, and substituted for them the same articles in German silver. When we remonstrated, they affirmed, with a sneer, that it was better than Britannia metal, at all events. Stung by despair to rejoinder, though too depressed for repartee, we had sarcastically observed that we had no idea they had been so witty. 'We are not so in our own country, it is true,' said they frankly, 'but we like our joke at other people's expense.' As to the sums they extorted from us, in the way of requisition, they were quite fabulous, as was, with facetiousness, remarked by the *Kladderadatch* (late *Punch*): 'We paid the piper, and they all smoked.' When money was not forthcoming, they took other valuables. Often and often, on the lonely ocean, I have heard, near midnight, a 'tick-tick-tick'—ing steal over the waste of waters, and then a silvery discord, as though not eight bells but eighty thousand were all striking on my ear at once; and then I knew that some ship was

nearing us choke-full of English clocks and watches, bound for Germany. Such vessels never got there; their crews were invariably hurried from time into eternity before they could say: '*Wie viel Uhr ist es?*' (What's o'clock?) by one discharge from our Big Gun. But I anticipate.

At the time I speak of, not a spark in the way of reprisal glimmered on the horizon of my imagination (I speak for self, and not for Grimsby), notwithstanding all the wrongs and insults that had been heaped upon us. For instance, our beloved Prince of Wales was immured at Hurlingham, and fed exclusively on pigeon-pie; while the rest of our aristocracy (even though they had German blood in their veins) were condemned to horse-flesh, in satirical allusion to their attachment to the turf. Such, at least, were the reports that flew about, until the newspapers were placed under military control. The inspectors of the press were very severe, but not always intelligent. It was announced that the Laureate had been applied to for an ode in the English tongue upon the occasion of the pious Emperor's birthday; and the poet's reply, written in hexameter lines, and expressing his readiness to accede to the imperial wishes, was published *in extenso*, but with the initials M. F. T. appended to it. The censorship of books, too, was very strict; but it was eluded by the following device of patriotic publishers; they printed *in italics* all lines in permitted books which seemed to have any reference to our conquerors: in Hood's *Epistle to Ræ Wilson*, the line,

For being so particular religious, *that* ought to have put master on his guard,

was rendered thus conspicuous; and its reference to the Emperor being unmistakable, Messrs Moxon's establishment was razed to the ground, and its site occupied by a German sausage-manufactory. Not an opportunity was lost of denationalising the public mind, and of introducing the Teutonic element—the experience gained in the occupation of Alsace and Lorraine suggesting various devices for the accomplishment of this object. The German bands were withdrawn *en masse* from the seaside, and stationed in the most populous localities, with orders to play nothing else but *The Watch on the Rhine*, a tune which had a more personal significance to those who had been recently despoiled by a 'requisition' than was perhaps intended. The favourite short pipe of the inhabitants of the British Isles was interdicted. None were permitted to be used that measured less than four feet from stem—but my long continuance on shipboard has rendered me too nautical—I should have said from mouth-piece to bowl, inclusive of the angle. Upon the bowl was painted a representation of the typical German maiden, in short red petticoats and woollen stockings, in order to prepare our minds for the immigration of the female Teuton, which was to occur as soon as the occupation of our unhappy country was completely effected. It was also attempted to compel the consumption of German tobacco; but our poor islanders, though defeated, were not so spirit-broken as to submit to this outrageous act of oppression; many confirmed smokers even preferring death to the internal disorders it occasioned. The great national establishments at Burton-on-Trent were abolished, and sweet-beer manufactories introduced in their place—an enactment which begat more bitterness

than it suppressed. The use of spoons at dinner was absolutely prohibited; in consequence of which, many genteel persons disfigured their mouths in a ghastly manner, while some even swallowed their knives in the servile attempt to flatter their conquerors by imitating their habits at meals. Fresh cabbages were taxed so heavily that their production would have ceased except for the encouragement held out to them when pickled; and washing, though not rendered absolutely penal, was discontinued by all who wished to be on good terms with the new authorities. On the other hand, considerable fortunes were reaped by the possessors of spittoons, which were held even by the highest officials as objects of great rarity, the use of which had been hitherto absolutely unknown to them.

I confine myself to these social events, partly because the military ones—those unhappy reverses which reduced us from a first-rate power to a conquered province—have been already related by Sir Francis Head, Colonels Hamley and Chesney, and the other historians of the *Battle of Dorking*—and partly because I do not understand them. It is generally understood that but for the gallant stand made by the horse-marines on Tower Hill, no terms would have been allowed for the City, which would have been given up to pillage for three days; but, on the other hand, it is asserted that the very idea of such a thing had such a paralysing effect upon the German army—one of the chief symptoms being an incontinent watering of the mouth, so great as to prevent articulate speech (their language being slightly guttural)—that the tempting prospect had to be abandoned. At all events, moderation, even in the hour of triumph, prevailed. Bismark contented himself with seizing the contents of the Bank cellars, and imposing a fine of five hundred millions sterling upon the Lord Mayor, which was paid before sunset. The same night, the Prince visited Cremorne (*incog.*), and witnessed the spectacle of the Retaking of Strasburg by the French, which (so sudden was the capture of the metropolis), the proprietors of the gardens had not time to withdraw from the bills. The unintentional disrespect was forgiven (not, however, it is hardly necessary to say, without the levy of a requisition); and the Prince is said to have good-naturedly observed, that 'if the supernumeraries employed in the mimic contest had been present at Dorking, the affair might have ended very differently.' They were not numerous, but their accession would have doubled the British cavalry and increased the foot by about one-third.

This subject of our subjugation is too painful to be dwelt upon, and yet it can scarcely be quite avoided. It will naturally be asked how was it that I found myself on board the *Bella Donna*. Well, it was the only vessel belonging to the British fleet that still existed to be on board of. 'The rest' [I extract from the historians above alluded to] 'were all destroyed by torpedoes.' Their wrecks bestrewed the seas from the Skattegat and Cattegat (so well known to youthful geographers) down to the North Foreland, and brought down the price of old iron in our coast towns to a mere song. The *Bella Donna* was the only vessel constructed upon the novel principle of being entirely under water, except its funnels, through one of which it breathed (at times rather stertorously), and the One Great Gun, which it

carried on its poop or somewhere—I don't pretend to accuracy in such details—with its nose in the air. But some description of our craft is absolutely necessary for the understanding of what follows, so the unprofessional reader must excuse me if I make a short scientific digression for that purpose.

When Messrs Reed, Robinson, Childers, Goschen, Pakenham, and others flung themselves on the floor of St Stephen's (in consequence of so many vessels going to the bottom), and made that famous unanimous confession of incompetence which delighted the newspapers so much, it was perceived by Earl Gladstone that only three courses were open to future governments with respect to ship-building. One of these (the two others I have forgotten, which is of the less consequence since they were not adopted) was to build ships that should be *under water, to begin with*; and this was the case with the *Bella Donna*. Let me be distinctly understood in this matter, for what I would avoid above all things is the charge of exaggeration. We were only under water when we wished to conceal ourselves from hostile observation, and when it was very rough; in such cases, the Great Gun was lowered by machinery into the hold, and the iron bulwarks of the vessel, which moved on hinges, were fastened flat upon it. So far, the ship was in no way different from the more recent examples of the floating battery. But instead of looking like a big barge, as it does, we only shewed above the water two funnels—the one to admit air, and (in a slight degree) light; the other to eject what little smoke we did not ourselves consume. This was so thin and feathery that it might have been taken for the breath of the vessel itself—a resemblance which (as I have hinted) was strengthened when she snorted. The atmosphere under hatches was a little confined, it must be owned, and everything below had a glassy and sea-green aspect, by reason of the side-lights (which were small, and of very thick plate-glass) being beneath the waves. The crew of the *Bella Donna* lived, in fact, in a sort of huge vivarium, with an aquarium outside of it. And just as, when England was a free country, and we had visited the Zoological Gardens on a Sunday with a member's ticket, we were wont to stare at the pike and perch in their glass boxes, so now did the pike and perch (or their marine equivalents) come to glare at us, and wonder how we liked it. We could sink twenty feet down, or even more, by means of a contrivance for exhausting the air, but it was imprudent to do so, not only because breathing became difficult under such circumstances, but because if once the water should come in at the top of either funnel, we were done for. Nevertheless, for purposes of concealment we sometimes ran it very fine; I have been twenty-two feet under the British Channel, for instance, when nothing of us would have been visible to the superficial observer (and fortunately all observers except the fish were superficial) save the Corinthian summits of the funnels, which were purposely shaped after that order of architecture, in order to resemble water-lilies. The astonishment of the casual sea-farer may be more easily imagined than described, when, approaching these interesting objects of Natural History, he beheld their stalks suddenly emerge from the water, followed rapidly by our unpretending hull; and even that sentiment was a trifling emotion com-

pared with the feelings he experienced (if hostile) when we threw off all reserve and our shifting deck, and favoured him with a private view of our Great Gun. To attempt flight, was (as the novelists say) worse than useless; for the further off a ship was (that is, within a moderate limit, say, of four miles), the more certain was our shot to cripple her. At close-quarters of a mile or so, she sometimes escaped us; unless, like a sparrow fired at by swan-shot, she was blown to pieces into the air.

Perhaps it may be inquired how we contrived, in so small a space, to stow provisions sufficient for our sustenance, besides the enormous ammunition required for our fighting friend, the Gun. The same question occurred to my own mind, when I first found myself supernumerary mate on board the *Bella Donna*. 'If they have not enough for their ordinary crew,' said I to myself, 'what a bad look-out it will be for the supernumerary!' It was 'a bad look-out' for everybody in one sense, or at least a very dim one, but not so bad as it seemed with respect to food. The fact was, we had a good store of Humboldt's Meat Markers, without which no nautical larder can be said to be complete. When house and land are gone, or at least at a considerable distance, and fresh mutton and everything else that is worth eating are unprocureable, the M. Ms are most excellent. They are cut in small rounds like whist-markers (whence their name), and bolted. The great Humboldt, who loved whist, and who regretted nothing so much as the want of a partner on his travels (except that of an adversary), was often also in need of fresh meat; and to the combination of these two necessities (as it is supposed) we owe this admirable invention. It was not, however, nice to taste. The method adopted by those who best knew what it was like, was to place the article on the tip of the tongue, and then to get a friend to slap them sharply and suddenly on the back. Then it went down like a shot, and began invigorating you very much almost immediately. At best, however, it must be confessed that we 'hurried over our meals;' even the habit of saying grace before and after them was intermitted, since the phrase 'For what we are going to receive,' was followed so immediately by 'For what we have received,' that the reports were almost simultaneous. Water, of course, we distilled from sea-water in the usual way, so that as long as we had anything left to mix with it, we were quite independent of supplies from the land. The want of grog, however, as will be seen, was a fatal blot in our economy.

We had plenty of ballast—though of what that ballast was composed it would be premature to state—but we were rather short of society; the whole crew consisting but of a hundred souls or so, inclusive of the marines. But what there was of it was very choice. For, consider, we were the only Englishmen to whom, at that epoch, the two national tunes, *Britons never, never*, &c., and *Britannia rules the Waves*, could be played without a touch of sarcasm. We were the sole free and independent representatives of our beloved countrymen; we were acting deputy-assistants for the Queen and the rest of the royal family, for the Houses of Lords and Commons, for the Odd-fellows, the Gas and Water Companies, the Pure Literature Association, and other great social bodies, who are the flower of the nation. In a word, we were

England Afloat, and were conscious that she expected every one of us to do his duty. We were conscious, also, that Captain Grimsby expected it, which had, as it were, a corroborative effect. There was only one lady on board the vessel, the gunner's daughter, and an introduction to her was what everybody shrank from (from motives of delicacy which will be appreciated by sailors) above everything; and this introduction was always effected by the captain on the least approach to misbehaviour. 'Godfrey Daniel, Blast and Furnace Maker' (he would observe to the engineer, if the least thing went wrong, such as 'Stop her!' for 'Go on ahead!' or the like), 'I'll make you acquainted with the gunner's daughter; and then you will have some reason to cry "Stop her!" Godfrey Daniel.' My brother-in-law's language was very much more coarse than the above, though, strange to say, he lisped exceedingly. 'Thimmon,' he would say, 'you are a thimble thawney, or I would have you thwabbed.'

'My dear Sammy,' I would remonstrate, 'how can you talk like that?'

'Thammy!' he would reply, quite in a rage; 'how dare you addreth me as Thammy! I'm your captain, thir. Thammy, indeed—damme!'

I had never experienced such conduct. He was all at sea as to manners now, though he had known how to be civil enough on shore, and had (unknown to his sister) borrowed money of me on several occasions. He did not hesitate to be facetious when I lost almost everything at that dreadful game of pitch-and-toss in which the *Bella Donna* indulged. A man who can jest with a fellow-creature in the throes of sea-sickness, even in the way of kindness, is one whom it would be rank flattery to call an officer and a gentleman. But this was a private affair, though urgent: let me not forget that I am writing history, not autobiography—the annals of what was left of a nation, not the narrative of an individual wreck. The captain himself, I am bound to confess, was deaf to all personal considerations; the remonstrances of one like myself, endeared to him by the ties of marriage, had no effect upon his iron determination. 'Gallant seaman!' cried I, embracing his bow-legs, 'do not take us out to the ocean; let us stop in the river, where all is smooth and safe. Remember, it was at sea that all the British fleet met with destruction on Thursday (or Friday) fortnight. What man dares do, I dare; let the German invader come in any shape (even his own), save one, and I defy him; but, O gallant seaman, listen to the words of one who is nearly two years your senior, and AVOID TORPEDOES!'

'O yeth, I darethay,' was my relative's contemptuous reply. 'Who kairth for torpedoes? I call 'em fog-thignals. They are quite exploded.'

My distinguished relative had a reason for his confidence, with which, in course of time, I became acquainted. The last Controller of the Navy, who had so fortunately devised our gallant craft in the very nick of time, had also hit upon a plan to secure it from what might be said to be the only enemy it had to fear—the Torpedo. Unlike most government officials, he kept his eyes open, and had watched the marvellous effect of Toddle's Cement on broken china. 'Once mended,' (vide advertisement), 'the crack is incapable of a second rupture.' The *Bella Donna* was, therefore, 'broken up' into minute fragments, and then

put together again (like a mosaic); whereby it became infrangible. No less than a hundred thousand bottles of the Cement we applied to this purpose, at the wholesale price of ninepence-halfpenny a bottle; and a great fuss was made about this item in the Estimates. But the government stuck to it (they couldn't help it), and most happily carried their point.

'She'll sink,' said the Opposition, 'will that *Bella Donna* of yours, as sure as we sit here.'

'She will sink,' said the Controller gaily: 'that is one of her advantages, but she will still remain as buoyant, for all that, as any of the honourable members opposite who are "half-seas over."'

'Torpedoes will break her in pieces,' continued the ship's opponents.

'She is already in small pieces,' was the triumphant reply of the Controller.

I extract the actual words from the Parliamentary Report, because an erroneous impression has got abroad that our system was to sell the torpedo, or rather to undersell it, by gaining a lower level. The popular idea is that our struggles with that wily foe resembled those between a hawk and a heron, the latter of which is always trying to sink beneath its adversary, and in that favourable position to present its bill for acceptance. But this is fallacious. We took the torpedoes just as they came. There was a dull, soft sound, like treading upon a large frog, and a shock of about the same intensity as would be produced by such an occurrence; and then, as though a gigantic ginger-beer bottle had burst, the foam fountains which it cast up would come falling through our funnels and putting our pipes out. The encounter had its inconveniences, but was wholly without risk. So soon as we had put this to the proof, we lowered the painter, who, erasing our baptismal name, substituted for it that now 'household word,' the *Anti-Torpedo*.

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XL.—THE MAGISTRATES' MEETING.

It is one of the disadvantages of being studiously reticent and undemonstrative, that when the feelings do get the better of such persons, they are apt to exhibit themselves in some abnormal condition far more unpleasant and astonishing than are the usual tokens of surprise or woe. A man who never shares a grief becomes dyspeptic, and goes mad; a woman who never sheds a tear, has fits; and thus it happened to Cousin Jane, though it was only a fainting-fit. Not a word had she spoken throughout that discussion between my father and Cecil, notwithstanding that she herself had partly formed the subject of it, and had even been indirectly appealed to. Not a sign had she given of interest in the man whose terrible fate had precipitated the discovery of Cecil's 'love affair.' She had hidden every trace of feeling, save that in place of working as usual at the Chinese puzzle, she had stuck in the middle of it, like an automaton chess-player out of repair; and thus, when the news that Martha brought, 'He's been and found the murderer,' fell suddenly on her ear; her nerves, unnaturally braced, had fairly given way, and total prostration followed. I saw her face, as Cecil leaped to her aid, and anything more ghastly it was impossible to imagine. If the

parlour-maid had opened the door with, 'Please, sir, the murderer,' and introduced some gentleman dripping with gore, the sensation, so far as Cousin Jane was concerned, could not have been more complete or stupendous. She was carried up, unconscious, to her room; and the shock, acting, doubtless, on a system enfeebled by recent indisposition, affected her very seriously. We did not see her again for days. Aunt Ben, on the other hand, impressionable and sympathetic by nature with respect to all 'her own belongings,' as she called them, and by no means philosophic even as respected human affairs in general, bore Martha's piece of news with reasonable composure, though she admitted that the communication of it had 'given her a turn.' It was, however, the circumstances under which the news had arrived, perhaps—late at night, and when our minds were curiously enough engaged on a subject so closely connected with it—rather than the news itself that was startling, or even strange. That the man who had removed the props from the sand-pit should, sooner or later, be found out, was only what might have been expected; and now that he was found, he had not even the ordinary attraction of a detected villain, for it was only poor half-witted 'Batty' after all.

As the village idiot had already been convicted of a similar offence, it might naturally have been supposed that all eyes would at once have turned upon him with suspicion in the present instance; but this had not been the case. That some had charged him with the crime, was true, but he had denied the fact with a characteristic irritation that seemed to have the force of truth, and his simple, inoffensive nature had been too well understood for him to become the object of general suspicion. If the props had been taken for gain, it would have been another matter; but poor Batty was certainly not the man to have removed the props for mere mischief, even though he might not have realised to himself the peril of such a proceeding. There was another reason, too, why he should have escaped, at all events, the scrutiny of the coroner's inquest, in the absence of any positive proof of his guilt: it was commonly believed that he was a natural son of old Mr Bourne. The Alchemist's reputation was by no means unsullied as a man of gallantry, though he did not look like a Belmour or a Lothario. Though so eminently sagacious (after his fashion), he was, in fact, credited with a weakness for the fair sex up to rather an advanced period of life; with being very 'human,' if not 'humane;' and I fear that village scandal did not in this matter do him wrong. At all events, since this great man had chosen in his wisdom to utterly neglect Batty from the cradle (or whatever had been his cheap substitute for that commodity), it was obviously not for his dependents, the village folk, to bring the poor fellow into prominence on the present occasion. After his denial, therefore, of the offence in question, which had besides been never laid seriously to his charge, Batty had been left unmolested, and, perhaps, would not have been further troubled about it, but for his own act. When the verdict of Wilful Murder, however, was being discussed in the village alehouse in his presence, a sense of the importance which would accrue to the culprit seemed to strike him forcibly, and he had made frank and full confession.

'I took the props away,' said the poor creature;

'and now I shall be taken to London town and hanged;' an idea that evidently gave him the greatest satisfaction. He would see the metropolis (as he erroneously imagined), at all events, and would probably become a great public character, which (locally) he undoubtedly did. The village constable had, on his part, taken him up, with as deep a conviction of the greatness of his charge, as the official who conveyed the seven bishops to the Tower could possibly have experienced; and had then come down to the Manor-house, as I have said, to report his exploit—to mention himself, as it were, conspicuously in his own despatches.

Except upon Mr Bourne's account, it was clearly a matter of congratulation that the offence was thus brought home to one to whom it could certainly not be imputed as a crime; and my father, who was a man who shut his ears to all scandals, had, at first, not even that alloy to his satisfaction. But on that very night, late as it was, the Alchemist made his appearance, and was closeted with him in the study for more than an hour, a fact which raised many eyebrows and loosened many tongues. It was remembered that on the last occasion of Batty's getting into trouble, it was Mr Bourne, from his place on the magistrates' bench, who had pooh-poohed the inquiry; and, though generally a harsh administrator of justice, had caused the prisoner to be dismissed with a light reprimand; and the purpose of his present untimely visit was unhesitatingly set down to his wish to induce my father to 'burke' inquiry into the present business. It was even reported that he had offered to restore the Manor lands to the House of Wray, if he would cause the matter to be hushed up—a proposition most unlikely to be made by such a man, and one which, if made, would undoubtedly have resulted in his being instantly turned out of the house. He would, indeed, I am persuaded, as soon have dared to ask Aunt Ben's virgin hand in marriage. Certain it is, however, that what he did say turned my father's contempt for the old man into disgust. His age had hitherto protected him from his satire, which subsequently it failed to do; and never shall I forget, when, some time afterwards, the old fellow was chuckling over his acquisition of some gain in stock or share like a male witch, the form which my father's congratulation took: 'You are fortunate still,' said he, in the words of Middleton:

'The very screech-owl lights upon your shoulder,
And woos you like a pigeon.'

The result of the interview was, in the end, not without its bearing upon my own fortunes, when it came to Mr Bourne's turn to influence them, but, for the present, it ended in the complete discomfiture of that worthy.

The ensuing day happened to be that appointed for one of the fortnightly magistrates' meetings at Holksham, and at it Batty was arraigned accordingly before a bench of three. Both Cecil and myself accompanied my father, and were 'accommodated with seats' on that imaginary elevation—for, as a matter of fact, each justice had a wooden chair—while the little court-house was crammed to the utmost by all Gatecombe. On account of the locality wherein the offence had been committed, my father was not, as usual, elected chairman (a most fortunate circumstance, as it afterwards turned out); and the same reason disqualifying Mr Bourne, the dignity was conferred on Mr Close,

Frank's father; an excellent divine, but one not altogether adapted by nature for the performance of magisterial functions. He was very deaf, and very fussy; and if the degrees of human intelligence should be expressed by the ten digits, progressively, that of the Rev. F. Close, J. P., would have been represented by the figure 2, at highest. Poor Batty's, however, stood only at $\frac{1}{2}$ or so, and he quailed before that important and awe-inspiring man as a mouse before an owl. Weeping and wringing his hands, he pitifully expressed his contrition for his offence even before it had been formally laid to his charge; while, dividing the public attention with him, old Mr Bourne, on the seat remotest from our little party, drooped his shaggy eyebrows and bit his nails. It may be imagined, therefore, that the whole scene contained elements of dramatic interest, and for my part I could not help reflecting how excellently it might be adapted for the stage.

'Hum, ha!' said the chairman, regarding Batty with a solemn shake of his white head. 'What is the prisoner's name, policeman?'

Now, this question, simple as it seemed, was not an easy one for anybody to answer, and totally beyond the power of the person interrogated.

'Well, your worship, it's just "Batty,"' returned the constable, in hesitating accents; and indeed the poor fellow had never been known, save in the parish register, where, I suppose, he had been entered under his matronymic, by any other name. Everybody looked at old Mr Bourne, and one or two (far back in the crowd) even began to snigger.

'Hum, ha!' reiterated the chairman, his face and bald head becoming red as a new-born infant with the sudden recollection of the *scandalum magnatum* against his brother-magistrate. 'Very good; proceed with the charge.' Whereupon Batty having pleaded 'Not guilty,' the village constable had his innings, and detailed the circumstances of the prisoner's capture and confession with painstaking circumlocution, and reiterated expression of hope that his evidence might give pleasure to their worships.

'Are you sure now, policeman,' inquired the chairman sternly, 'that this acknowledgment of the prisoner's guilt that you have detailed to us was made of his own free-will, and after due warning had been given to him, that whatever he said might subsequently be used against him?'

'Lor bless your worship,' replied the constable, looking towards Batty with a pitying smile, 'he couldn't have understood nothin' o' that—not he.'

'I don't ask you whether the prisoner would have understood you, sir,' exclaimed the chairman irascibly, 'I ask whether you gave him due legal admonishment?'

Mr Bourne nodded approval in reply to the sweeping glance of triumph at his own sagacity that here emanated from the chair, and a murmur of applause arose from the spectators.

'Justice Close knows how to tackle a fellow, mind ye, when it comes to law,' was an opinion uttered in my hearing, and received with marks of general adhesion. The constable's air, of late so impressively suggestive of having done his country a good turn, now became quite chop-fallen.

'Well, no, your worship; I can't say as I did.'

'Did what, sir?' inquired the inexorable chairman. 'Let us hear the whole truth.'

'Well, I didn't give him no due—whatever your worship pleased to call it—my old woman and me, we only gave him his supper.'

A roar of laughter followed this announcement, in which poor Batty joined tumultuously. He thought that everything was now good-humouredly arranged, and made an attempt to get out of his box, which had to be frustrated by physical force.

'It seems to me, Mr Chairman,' observed Mr Bourne, in a husky voice, 'that the evidence we have just heard, having been illegally extracted by the constable, on his own confession, is quite worthless, and cannot be used against the prisoner at all.'

'What, what? Then what the deuce is to be done?' returned the chairman in a whisper. 'Can't dismiss the case, you know; that's impossible.'

'Why not?' answered the old man in the same low tones; 'there's no case to go on with.'

'No case! Why, I'm come here on purpose; pooh, pooh.—What do you say, Mr Wray?'

My father shrugged his shoulders: he knew well enough what should be done, I saw, but he did not wish to take any leading part in the affair. 'Ask the clerk,' said he curtly.

Now the magistrate's clerk at Holksham (as in one or two other country seats of justice in these isles) was in fact the sole authority from which all judgments of the bench were derived; and the fiction was always kept up among the Great Unpaid of his being the mere amanuensis and recorder of their legal decisions. To 'ask the clerk' was therefore an impossible suggestion, and one which caused the Rev. Mr Close to frown and shake his head; but he bent down over the table, and held a consultation with that functionary in a low tone, the peculiarity of which was that all the signs of gesture-language were reversed in it, so that to the eyes of the spectators it appeared as if the clerk were humbly putting his interrogatories, and the chairman blandly but firmly laying down the law. It was really a very clever performance on the part of his worship, and got him great credit; but it was even a still cleverer on the part of the clerk, since it got him not only credit, but insured the continuance of a salary of some hundreds a year.

'Let those witnesses be summoned,' observed the chairman, speaking aloud, and with great dignity, 'upon whose information the constable was induced to arrest the prisoner.'

At this there was a slight commotion in the crowd, as though two or three persons were making a hurried exit; and when the constable had indicated who the proposed witnesses were, it was discovered that they were not in court; for to be connected with a great public event in its first stage—such as picking up a man who has been run over by a Hansom cab, or running for the fire-escape when we see flames—is often very gratifying; whereas some subsequent development of the affair—such as an inquest, or an action at law by an insurance company—may cause us a good deal of trouble, if it does not seriously compromise us.

Thus, in the skittle-ground of the *Red Lion*, it had doubtless been very pleasant to detect a wilful murderer; but it was not at all pleasant to have to prove the fact on oath before the Holksham bench, and then to be 'bound over,' perhaps, to do it again before the still more impressive majesty of the judges of assize. The constable's self-important airs had persuaded his informers that all responsibility

had been shifted to his official shoulders, and now that they found themselves about to share it, they had turned and fled. The getting up of criminal cases, as may be inferred, was not an art brought to perfection at Gatoombe.

The witnesses having in vain been summoned, the proceedings came once more to a dead-lock; and again Mr Bourne remonstrated with 'the chair' against the case being proceeded with.

'But we are not proceeding, Mr Bourne,' argued the unhappy chairman; 'we are waiting for evidence.'

'You may do as you please, Mr Chairman,' answered the old man, raising his voice, 'but it will be at your own risk. I am not at all sure that the prisoner may not have grounds for bringing an action against us for false imprisonment. He has pleaded "Not guilty," and nothing has been brought forward'—

'Please your worships,' here exclaimed one of the constables in charge of Batty, 'the prisoner is a-telling us as how he did it.'

'What do you mean?' ejaculated the chairman, incredulously, yet welcoming any solution of the difficulty in which he found himself involved. 'He's not saying he's Guilty, is he?'

'I did it, I did it!' here broke out poor Batty, wearied with the tediousness of the proceedings, and thoroughly disenchanted of the attractions of a public position. 'I stole the props, and made the cave fall in. There, there! Now let's be off to London.'

It was a pitiful sight to behold the witless, friendless lad (he was not much over twenty, and looked younger) turning from one to the other of those who stood about him, and pleading to be taken away. Even old Mr Bourne had for once the sympathies of his hearers with him, when he pointed out to the chairman the absurdity of pursuing so serious a charge against one who had manifestly shewn himself an irresponsible agent.

'But there's a man been killed,' urged Mr Close, 'and here's the fellow that did it, and says he did it.'

'That's just the point, my good sir. This unfortunate lad will say anything, because, as everybody is aware, he does not know what he says.'

'Well, well, you know more about him than I do, Mr Bourne; that is,' stammered the chairman, 'you ought to do so; I mean, because he belongs to your parish. But we who sit here have nothing to do with previous acquaintance with an accused person.—What do you say, Mr Wray?'

'If you ask my opinion,' said my father gravely, 'I must needs say that since we have this poor fellow before us protesting that he committed the offence with which he is charged, I see no other alternative than to send him for trial. A judge and a jury are as competent to perceive his irresponsibility as ourselves. Indeed, we have no power, as it seems to me, to deal with the matter otherwise.'

The chairman looked towards the clerk, who, with obsequious face, seemed to reply: 'Just as you please, sir; you are the best judge;' but I caught in his deferential whisper the words: 'Your only course,' and 'the Home Secretary;' and then Mr Close's answer: 'The devil it is: then that settles it.'

Then the chairman blew his nose, like a trum-

peter proclaiming silence, settled his spectacles that had been disturbed by that operation, and addressed Batty in solemn tones.

'Prisoner at the bar, you stand committed.'

'I didn't commit it,' roared Batty; 'I was set on to do it. I was given money to do it.'

'Set on to do it? money!' ejaculated Mr Close.

'Yes, money,' repeated Batty, in a grudging tone. 'I knew I shouldn't be allowed to keep it—I never am; I have got it in the waist-band of my breeches. They've taken away my knife, or I would let you see the gold.'

'He has got money, your worship,' said the constable, rapidly investigating the repository thus indicated, 'though I'm sure I searched him through and through. Here are five golden sovereigns.'

If Batty had suddenly announced himself in possession of his five wits, and had laid them for inspection on the magistrates' table, they could not have excited greater wonderment than did the exhibition of this wealth. That Batty should have been in possession of such a sum was indeed as astonishing as though a vein of gold should have suddenly been come upon in the sand-cliff; a few shillings was the very most the poor fellow had ever had to call his own in his life; indeed, as a general rule, he did not earn sufficient to support himself, his scanty wages being supplemented by charity and parish relief.

'Where did you get this gold from, Batty?' said my father gravely; his magisterial functions utterly lost sight of for the moment, in the interest which this unexpected turn had given to the case. If this poor lad had really been bribed to remove the props, there was murder in the matter with a vengeance; but of course it seemed more probable that he had stolen the gold. That was the view, it seemed, which even Batty understood his audience to entertain, for he replied at once: 'It's my own money; it was given me for taking away the props.'

'Good heavens!' ejaculated Cecil in my ear. 'Did you ever hear anything so horrible! Perhaps poor Richard was right, after all, when he said: "I am a murdered man."'

'When was it given to you, and by whom?' continued my father kindly. 'You will not be punished for speaking the truth, you know.'

'It was given to me last Thursday; I remember that, because I got my dinner up at the Manor-house just before. They're always good to me up there.' There was a simple gratefulness in Batty's tone that touched one, but a curious sort of apologetic hesitation also; and he cast a wistful look at his interrogator, as much as to say: 'Do you really wish me to tell?'

'It was on Thursday, was it?' said my father. 'Well, and now tell us who it was who gave you these five sovereigns to take away the props from Richard Waller's pit.'

It was a calm summer day, and though the court-house windows were all open, not a breeze was stirring; the drowsy crow of a cock alone broke the hush without, and within was unbroken silence. Every eye was fixed on Batty, and every ear was stretched to catch his answer. He hesitated, glanced nervously towards us, and then, nodding towards my cousin, as though in unwilling recognition of him, answered simply: 'It was Mr Cecil, yonder.'

CHAPTER XII.—COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

The sensation produced by Batty's amazing statement on all who heard it was profound. The silence which had preceded it was broken by a confused murmur of astonishment, and then, once more, there was not a sound. All eyes had turned from Batty to Cecil, including those of my father and myself. I knew, of course, that the charge was absurd and false; but I looked to him to reply to it, just as if, had some senseless fellow struck at him in brutal jest, I should have expected to see him ward off the blow. But, since there he sat so pale and speechless, I could not choose but strike in for him in my passion, notwithstanding that his accuser was but a poor natural, with: 'You vagabond liar'—

'Hush, sir!' interposed my father sternly. 'It is not for you to speak.'

'Thank you, Fred,' whispered my cousin; 'thanks, my friend;' and then, with one deep sigh, he seemed to rouse himself from his stupor, and spoke aloud in his own clear tones. 'You are mistaken, Batty,' said he. 'Look at me again, and be quite sure.'

If Cecil's silence had been prejudicial to him in the opinion of the crowd, his voice and manner ought now to have redeemed it. In place of indignation at the hateful charge that had been brought against him, they only evinced gentleness and pity, though his face testified to the anguish that he suffered from this random shaft, that had pierced to his inmost heart, where lay Ruth's image.

'Yes, yes; it was Mr Cecil,' returned Batty peevishly, but without looking my cousin in the face. 'I know him well enough. He has given me money often.'

'Silver and copper,' said Cecil, still speaking in the same calm tone; 'but surely not gold, my good fellow.'

'Only once gold—the real red gold,' persisted Batty; 'but I was to do something for that, and I did do it; and now'—here he looked at his confiscated coins with pitiful yearning—'they have taken it all away. O dear, O dear!'

'Come, come; none of this drivelling,' observed the chairman angrily. He was a thorough gentleman at heart, and felt keenly for his brother magistrate, whose nephew he was well convinced had in reality no more to do with the affair than he had himself.

'The best way will be to let the poor fellow tell his story his own way,' whispered my father.

'Well, if you don't mind,' returned Mr Close; 'but it seems to me the fellow is mad.—What do you say, Mr Bourne?'

'Whether mad or not,' returned the old gentleman coldly, 'he is not more mad than he was five minutes ago, I suppose, when you were so bent on taking his evidence. But, if Mr Wray wishes to stop the proceedings, I for one do not wish to feed public scandal, whatever others may do.'

My father flushed from brow to chin at this malicious speech, but uttered not a word; and, when Mr Close glanced towards him in a helpless sort of way, only bent his head towards Batty.

'The bench wishes to hear all you have got to say, prisoner,' said the chairman, acting on this hint. 'If Mr Cecil did give you this money, how and when did it happen?'

'It was on the Thursday, I tell you,' said Batty, 'when I got the cold beef and pudding at the Manor-house.'

'Was it at the Manor-house that the money was given to you, or elsewhere?'

'Eh?' inquired Batty vacantly.

'What the deuce is to be done?' muttered the chairman; 'all this is but so much waste of time.'

'I think the word "elsewhere" has puzzled him, your worship,' murmured the obsequious clerk.

'Well, put the question to him yourself then,' said Mr Close testily. 'I am not used to talk with a fool.'

With a smile that perhaps veiled the thought, 'I am,' the clerk obeyed.

'Did Mr Cecil Wray give you this gold at the Manor-house?'

'No; in the fir-wood above Wayford, where I took my pudding to eat it.'

'About what time was that?'

'Why, at dinner-time of course.'

A roar of laughter burst forth from the crowd at this undesigned sally. It was not the opportuneness of the reply that provoked their mirth, but that readiness to seize upon anything facetious which is always manifested under circumstances of serious import, which gives piquancy to the small jest of the judge upon the bench, and to the unintentional *mot* in the parson's sermon; it put Batty, however, who took it as a compliment to his epigrammatic powers, in high good-humour.

'And the pudding was good, was it?' continued the clerk.

'It had plums in it,' returned the other triumphantly. 'But even the plums were not so good as the guineas that Mr Cecil brought me. "There," said he, "is enough to buy you fifty puddings;" and I would ha' bought 'em, and eat 'em too, if you'd ha' let 'em bide wi' me.'

'And what were you to do for the guineas?'

'Well, I was to go into Waller's pit that night, and take away the props,' he said. 'And so I did.—There, now, I have done wi' it.' And with the air of a man who has at last got free from his responsibilities, the poor natural made once more an attempt to leave his place of durance.

Frustrated again in that endeavour, he turned sulky, and refused to answer any more questions. The magistrates' clerk tried all his Machiavellian arts on him in vain; and, indeed, I don't believe the rack would have constrained Batty to speak a word, when in one of his morose moods.

'Is there anybody in court,' at last exclaimed the chairman wearily, 'who can throw any light upon this strange affair?'

I would have spoken long ago had not my father's rebuff forbidden me to do so; and I had only been waiting for an invitation of this kind to take advantage of it.

'I wish to be sworn, may it please your worships,' said I, stepping down from the little platform. My father looked surprised, but said nothing; and old Bourne favoured me with one of his ugliest looks, as I got into the witness-box.

'Administer the oath,' said the chairman, with eyebrows raised to their full height. I think he was under the impression that matters had at last come to a climax, and that I was about to say that it was I who had killed Richard Waller after all. 'Now, tell us, in Heaven's name, what you know about this matter, young gentleman.'

'I know nothing, sir,' said I, 'about the taking away the props; but I can prove that the prisoner's story, so far as my Cousin Cecil is concerned, is utterly false. On Thursday last—the date on which he is accused of having paid over this money—he was absent from Gatcombe, and in my company, at Monkton, the entire day.'

A murmur of applause broke forth in court, which was immediately hushed, when old Mr Bourne was seen about to speak.

'What you say is true, Mr Frederick Wray, I have no doubt,' said he coldly; 'but the prisoner may be right in the fact, though wrong in the date.'

Then ensued a scene such as the town-hall at Holksham had never before witnessed, even in the tumult of an election time. My father, though years ago, as I have said, he had lost his seat for the county, had always been personally popular; the natural interest excited by the charge so unexpectedly brought against his relative had been largely mixed with sympathy upon his own account; and now that Cecil had been apparently exonerated from blame—that this old miser, whom everybody despised or feared, should seem still to hold him guilty—raised public indignation to the uttermost. I had never before heard that peculiar 'yah, yah,' of an English mob, in which contempt and hate find such acid but forcible expression; and I looked with wonder at the transformation of that tossing throng, most of whom were labourers in the sand-cliff, and well known to me, but who now, as they yelled and shook their fists against their common enemy, as though they would have torn his heart out, had suddenly become unrecognisable. In the social world, perhaps, as in the physical, though all without appears so safe and solid, there is but a thin layer that hides from view the central fire.

I am bound to say that old Mr Bourne shewed himself no coward, but sat in his place looking down in grim silence upon the tumult, while my father rose and denounced it. It seemed to be his business to do so rather than that of the chairman, since the disorder had its origin partly on his own account; and he did it with a fire and energy for which few would have given him credit. It was necessary, as he afterwards apologetically explained, to speak in the Cambyzes vein, when there were only two policemen to back the voice of authority against five hundred rebels; and, at all events, he re-established comparative calm, during which the proceedings were concluded.

Batty was committed for trial. It was impossible that any other course could have been taken, since, though the details of his confession—to which he had stuck with as great tenacity as to the main fact—had been disproved, there was his possession of those five golden pieces to be accounted for, which, as the chairman ventured to observe without consultation with his familiar, if they had not been given him for the purpose he had stated, 'had been certainly come by by some dishonest means, which it was for a judge and jury to investigate and determine.'

Though not unconscious of the want of logic in Mr Close's reasoning, I felt, for my own part, that the contents of poor Batty's waistband were indeed very strong corroborative evidence of his guilt; and as for his story, notwithstanding that I had exposed its falsity with my own lips, I

was well convinced that it was, at least, no fiction; not only was the poor lad utterly incapable of having invented it; he evidently believed that it was true. Such a tale might have been the delusion of a madman, but not of a poor natural such as Batty; and again, there was the gold.

After the first moment of his being so unexpectedly called upon in his own defence, Cecil had never lost his calm collected look, which had, however, an inexpressible sadness in it, as of one who had made up his mind to suffer much. As we drove home together, both my father and I endeavoured to cheer him, not by avoiding the subject which monopolised his mind, but by speculating on the strange fancy that had taken possession of Batty. That it was weird and baseless as a dream, would have been easy to prove in any case, but the fortunate circumstance of his having given a false date to the supposed occurrence, had, we argued, removed from it all aspect of seriousness. It did not become a man of sense to be disturbed about such a matter, and so forth. But my cousin only shook his head, and held his hand up, as though in rejection of all comfort.

'But, my dear Cecil,' said I, well understanding upon whose account he was so distressed, 'this charge against you of all men, is not only absurd, but monstrous, by reason of your well-known personal regard for the Wallers.'

'Yes,' returned he gloomily, 'but suppose it should be also well known that only last night I termed poor Richard "an obstacle," and was in a manner congratulating myself upon his "removal."'

'Nobody but an Old Bailey counsel could make anything of that, I think, Cecil,' observed my father cheerfully; 'and even as for the murder, as it is called, it remains to be proved such.'

'I believe it was a murder,' returned my cousin gravely. 'I believe Batty told the truth about the matter, so far as he was capable of understanding it.'

My father did not reply. I think he thought so too, as I did.

'But, if Batty was really bribed,' urged I, 'the intention of him who bribed him must have been doubly criminal, since the removal of the props not only jeopardised the life it destroyed, but that of Ruth also.'

Cecil shuddered.

'Well,' said I, 'it was you who saved her life; can any reasonable being suppose that it was also you who wished to kill her?'

'That is well put,' said my father. 'Fred. shall be brought up to the law.'

Shakespeare, no more thy silvan son
Nor all the art of Addison,
Pope's heaven-strung lyre, nor Waller's ease,
Nor Milton's mighty self must please.
The visage wan, the purblind sight,
The toil by day, the lamp at night,
The tedious forms, the solemn prate,
The pert dispute, the dull debate,
The drowsy bench, the babbling hall,
For thee, Old Bailey, welcome all!

Unselfishness was as much a characteristic of my father, as the quoting from ancient authors, and I felt that though doing his best to arouse Cecil from his gloom, he was himself much disturbed in mind. The malicious conduct of old Mr Bourne during the late inquiry had vexed him; and he was still

more annoyed with himself at being vexed at anything such as a man could do. Moreover, he detested publicity: *Od. profanum vulgus et arceo* might have been his motto, though he was neither proud nor unsympathetic; and now, it was only too probable that our family name would be in everybody's mouth for some time to come.

We brought home with us, of course, the contagion of our melancholy; and nobody would have recognised that night in our little party the same which had been so gay, and bent on gaiety, scarce a week ago. Cousin Jane did not make her appearance, but her brother visited her in her room, and I understood that she had received his news with her accustomed philosophy. She treated Batty's story with great contempt, and as being a fabrication from beginning to end. 'Depend upon it,' she said, 'there is nobody to blame in the matter but the fool himself, who is not without a method in his madness. If he had been well whipped on the first occasion when he stole the props (as he ought to have been), he would never have done it again.'

For the moment, Cecil, accustomed to defer to the opinions of his sister, was a little comforted; but on his asking her how she accounted for Batty's possession of the gold, her reply, though by no means without sagacity, was less satisfactory.

'Why, he stole it, of course, as he stole the props,' said she; 'and thus endeavours to excuse himself from two charges (one of them by anticipation), by one and the same story. If I had been chairman of the magistrates' bench, instead of Mr Justice Shallow, I would have dealt with the matter summarily enough—which I believe she would have done, and most devoutly wished she had.'

Poor Aunt Ben, on the other hand, was utterly demoralised by what had happened, and constantly dissolved in tears. She already beheld Cecil in the clutches of the law, out of which she was by no means of opinion that innocence always emerged triumphant. 'They will swear anything,' she sobbed, 'those lawyers' (whose position she vaguely confused with that of witnesses for the prosecution); 'and the cleverest of them are somehow always on the wrong side.'

'But, my dear aunt,' urged I, 'there is no sane person who even hints at Cecil being concerned in the matter.'

'I hope not, Frederick; I should like to see them at it,' returned she indignantly. 'The dear boy is, of course, as innocent as a lamb; and even if he wasn't, added she, throwing her arms about his neck and bursting into tears, 'his old Aunt Ben would love him all the same.'

Her naïveté did not even raise a smile among us. Cecil was far too wretched to be moved to mirth, and beside our common distress upon his account, my father and myself had each our own trouble. The events of the day, among other disagreeables, had left, he felt, a breach between the Manor-house and the Rectory: my father hated quarrels with his neighbours, and had hitherto always steered clear of them; and as for me, though I neither had nor could have any quarrel with Eleanor, it was only too probable that I should be from henceforth debarred from her society. Late in the evening, however, the rector came down to us accompanied by his daughter, and expressed himself in a very frank and generous fashion. I had no idea that in so dull and pompous a personage there could have existed so much

manly feeling; it had always seemed to me that there was not stuff enough in the Rev. John Bourne to make a gentleman, but I had been mistaken.

Without any undutiful reference to his father's unfriendly conduct towards us at the trial, of which he had probably received an exaggerated account, he gave us to understand that the report of it had annoyed and distressed him exceedingly.

Aunt Ben, however, received him with great stiffness (it is the women who perpetuate, even when they do not make our family vendettas), and very soon left the room, on pretence of looking after Jane.

Cecil had withdrawn himself when the door-bell had announced the arrival of visitors.

'I am sorry not to see my friend and pupil,' said the rector warmly. 'I regret beyond measure that he should have been exposed to this wicked slander, and especially that any relative of mine should have acted otherwise than to have put his foot upon it, and stamped it out as soon as named.'

My father was deeply moved, and I think as much taken by surprise by this generous behaviour as myself.

'Mr Bourne,' he said, 'did but do his duty as a magistrate, though he certainly might have evinced a more neighbourly feeling. His expression was that the prisoner might have been right in the fact, though incorrect in the date.'

'It is impossible that he could have been right in the fact,' observed the rector vehemently.

'As to Cecil, of course,' returned my father.

'What Mr Bourne doubtless meant to add was, that the statement was also incorrect as to the person.'

'You are most kind to say so,' said the rector; 'that is certainly what he ought to have said, and what I hope he will make a point of saying in public upon the first opportunity. It is in my opinion only what he owes to your nephew.'

My father bowed stiffly, with a grave smile. The idea of any public explanation of old Mr Bourne's being required to set his kinsman right in the eyes of the world seemed unpleasantly absurd.

'Can I see Cecil himself?' asked the rector hesitatingly.

'Go and fetch him, Fred,' said my father.

I left the room, but waited in the hall for Eleanor, who, I guessed, would follow me, under pretence of seeing Jane. It was evident that the two gentlemen wished to be alone, perhaps in order to speak of Batty.

'How shocking all this is!' cried she, bursting into tears for the first time. 'Poor, poor Cecil!'

'My dear Nelly,' said I, comforting her in lovers' fashion, 'you need not take it so to heart; it is only a nine days' wonder after all. The assizes will have been held by that time, and the real criminal have doubtless got his deserts.'

'Then you think there is a criminal, do you, Fred?' asked she with a frightened air.

'I do,' said I gravely; 'Batty could never have invented such a story. That he was bribed to take those props by somebody, I have hardly a doubt.'

'That is what Ruth says. I had hoped that she took a prejudiced view of the matter, on account of the words she heard her poor brother say—those last terrible words, that are always haunting her.'

I shook my head. 'It is useless to deceive ourselves, dear Nelly; there is a great mystery about this sad matter, which has not its beginning in poor Batty. How did Ruth take the news of to-day's doings?'

'That is what I wanted to see you about, dear Fred. When she first heard of that wicked attempt to implicate Cecil, I thought she would have broken her heart. She begged and prayed of me to send for him at once, but I dared not do it; and presently my grandfather came in—and—and—there has been a quarrel between him and your father, and he spoke very bitterly against the family, and especially against Cecil, in Ruth's presence, just as though he had really been the guilty person; and Ruth spoke up for him to his face—who could blame her for it!—and he bade her leave the house at once, and she is gone.'

'Good Heavens! gone whither?'

'I do not know. I was not allowed to speak with her. Grandpapa is so hard, you know.'

Here I heard the drawing-room bell ring, and knowing that it was for Cecil, we parted hastily. I ran up to my cousin's room, but it was empty. I called: 'Cecil, Cecil!' at the top of my voice, but there was no reply. I looked at my watch; it was nearly eleven o'clock. Then I went down-stairs, and found from Martha that my cousin had left the house immediately after Mr Bourne and Miss Eleanor had arrived. Whither could he have gone at such a time of night, and on what errand? A cold despair crept to my heart, as the thought flashed upon me: 'Suppose he should have gone away for good!' What a terrible misnomer would that 'for good' be, had he really fled with Batty's ghastly accusation hanging over him!

CHANGE OF AIR.

AMONGST other small items in connection with the great Tichborne case which have been served up to satisfy the appetite of a news-craving public, is one which informs us that, during the progress of the trial, the gas in the roof was lighted day by day to assist the ventilation, but that the atmosphere of the court at best was foul. Hence, we are told, there was a prevailing fatigue visible about three o'clock in the afternoon—ladies drooped, flower-like; gentlemen gasped; the judge and counsel took notes languidly; and the hand of the clock was gazed at with comical persistency.

Who that has ever been into a court of law, a ball or concert room, the church of a popular preacher, or any other building where crowds assemble, has not seen and experienced the same things—a foul atmosphere that makes breathing an effort instead of a spontaneous action of the lungs; a lack of interest, even in the most important or pleasing subjects; a lassitude and fatigue painful to bear? The most eloquent speaker grows prosy, the most harmonious music falls flat, the most enchanting occupation becomes a bore, and we heartily 'wish the thing over'—all because our buildings are so badly ventilated, and we cannot get fresh air. Nor does the mischief end there; for we too often pay an additional penalty the next day, in the shape of aching heads, bemuddled brains, and listless wills. What we experience occasionally in our public buildings, we meet with every day, in a smaller degree, in most

of our dwelling-houses and places of business. Scarcely anywhere indoors can we obtain the blessings of a pure atmosphere.

It seems strange that, notwithstanding the increasing spread of scientific knowledge, such a state of things should be allowed to prevail to so great an extent. People can scarcely be ignorant of the necessity for ventilation, for the story of the Black Hole of Calcutta is drummed into every school-boy and school-girl, and popular scientific writers and lecturers have done their best to instruct older people. It is now pretty generally known that the blood, which leaves the heart pure and red, becomes gradually charged with impurity during its circulation through the system, owing to the refuse matter which it takes up in its course, and that it passes into the lungs to undergo a process of purification before it starts upon another journey. It is known, too, that the purification is effected by the air, which we draw into our lungs at every inspiration, and that it is accomplished at the expense of the purity of the air itself, the refuse matter being transferred from the blood to the air. Thus, the air which enters the lungs rich in life-supporting oxygen, returns laden with carbonic acid—a narcotic of the most powerful character, which, taken in a diluted form, produces an intolerable weariness and drowsiness; taken neat, it produces death! In this way, the air around us is poisoned at the rate of about a gallon per minute by every breathing individual. Yet, it is a startling fact, that the private houses are few and far between where any provision at all is made for getting rid of the foul air, and that in our public buildings, such provision—where there happens to be any—is, with few exceptions, utterly inadequate. Let the reader count up the houses of his friends which have any special outlet in the rooms for the escape of the vitiated atmosphere, and he will probably find that the fingers of one hand will more than suffice for the enumeration; or let him go into any public building in his neighbourhood when there is a crowded gathering in it, and he will soon be conscious that though the architect may have attempted to ventilate it, his attempt has been an unmistakable failure—a failure of which he would have been heartily ashamed had it occurred in any other department of his work. And this is submitted to without complaint. Educated people, professing to be amazed at the careless folly of the poor labourer who descends some deep well without testing it, and is poisoned by the carbonic acid lurking at the bottom, are yet careless enough and foolish enough to breathe the very self-same gas every day of their lives. The only difference is that in one case the gas is, as we have said, taken 'neat,' in the other it is taken diluted. Naturally, such people need to betake themselves frequently to the mountains, or the lakes, or the sea-shore, for 'change of air'; but however frequent their visits to such places may be, they cannot make up for the lack of a continual change of air at home. Until that is secured, the full measure of health can never be enjoyed, the full term of life cannot fairly be anticipated. Nature has carefully provided for the purification of the blood and the refreshment of the system, but demands that we give her pure air with which to carry on the process; without it she is powerless to keep us in well-being. If we supply our lungs with poisonous gas, we can no more expect a

satisfactory result than we should if we supplied our stomachs with poisonous food.

Perhaps the old axiom 'Out of sight, out of mind' accounts to some extent for the neglect which prevails with reference to this important matter. Carbonic acid is an unseen foe, and therefore too often a disregarded one. We forget the cause, though we feel its effects; hence we attribute them to any source but the true one, and are continually striving to cure them, instead of preventing them. It might astonish us if we could know how much of the drunkenness which prevails amongst the lower classes is caused by the non-ventilated workshops and houses in which they spend their lives. Ignorant of what it is that causes them to crave for a stimulant, they seek to supply by artificial means that which Nature holds out to them freely. Not knowing that the fire of life within them is choked by foul air, they strive to make it burn brightly by a supply of alcohol.

But perhaps the most potent cause for the general neglect of ventilation is the fact that practical men have failed, as yet, to provide any simple and thoroughly satisfactory method of carrying it out. To make a hole of some sort or other for the escape of the foul air is about all, it would seem, which can be done in the matter. True, the hole may be fitted with a trap-door and a richly ornamented grating, and may be surmounted by a tastefully designed cupola, so that it has the appearance of being a well-considered contrivance; but a simple hole it is, after all, and in most cases a very unsatisfactory one. Whether it lets out the foul air or not, it generally lets in a continual stream of cold air, which makes the inmates glad to draw down the trap-door, and let ventilation take care of itself. Not long ago, a body of magistrates, impressed with the necessity of ventilating the room in which they met once a quarter to transact the county business, voted a sum of several pounds to their surveyor to provide proper appliances for the purpose. The regulation hole was made, with ornamental grating and cupola complete, and the result was that, at their next sessions, the worthy magistrates were compelled to sit with their hats on, and were fain to give orders to have the hole stopped up again. Probably, they have made no further attempts at ventilation, but have resigned themselves, as so many others do, to the inevitable slow-poisoning process.

The system of ventilating by means of a hole in the ceiling or roof is founded on the idea that warm air must, of necessity, ascend, and that, if there is but an outlet at the top of the room, the warm air will certainly find its way through it. The idea, however, is but half a truth. Warm air will ascend if it be forced to do so; but to understand the principle exactly, we must remember that nothing really ascends of itself; everything has a tendency to fall. For convenience' sake, we make use of somewhat incorrect terms, and are frequently led thereby into incorrect ideas: thus, we talk of things 'rising,' and get the idea that by some innate power they lift themselves above other things, whereas the exact truth is that other things get beneath them, and push them upwards. There is no such force, be it borne in mind, as levity; gravity there is. Suppose, by way of example, that we put a small quantity of oil into a glass; we know that the oil will have no power to raise itself to the top of the glass; but if we pour

water into the glass, the oil will then 'rise,' as we express it, to the surface, simply because the water being, bulk for bulk, heavier than the oil, gets underneath it, and forces it up. Exactly the same holds good with reference to air: the warm air in a room has no power whatever in itself to rise, but if cold air, which is heavier, be admitted, it will get underneath the warm air, and force it out. Let it be clearly understood that the incoming of the cold air must precede the outgoing of the warm air, and it will at once be seen that ventilation, simply by means of holes, must of necessity subject us to cold 'draughts.' What can we expect if we open a hole in the roof, but that the heavy cold air from without will pour down upon us in a chilling *douche*. An unpleasant price to pay for a very doubtful benefit, for, supposing that we were content to endure the draught, and run the risk of catching cold, and all its attendant evils, it may still be questioned whether we should get rid of the foul air. If we pour cold water into a pail containing hot water, we do not expect all the hot water to rise to the surface, we expect rather that the hot water will be cooled, and the whole assume an equal temperature. In the same way, although, when there is a rush of cold air into a room, some of the warm air is undoubtedly expelled, a considerable portion of it is probably not expelled at all, but only chilled; and, though the warmth may thus be destroyed, the impurity will remain. Carbonic acid is specifically heavier than ordinary air; hence, as we have said, it frequently lurks at the bottom of pits and wells. When it issues from the lungs, it is lighter than ordinary air, having been heated by contact with the blood, and, consequently, it is forced upwards and away from us by the colder air around us; but if it be reduced by any means to the same temperature as the atmosphere, it will of necessity fall. If, therefore, the vitiated air is chilled at the outlet of a ventilator, instead of escaping by it, there will be a continual condensation and deposit of the carbonic acid, and the room will be almost as foul as though it were hermetically sealed. The burning of gas and such other expedients 'to assist the ventilation' will only make matters worse, by contributing still more to the impurity of the air.

It would seem, from these considerations, that it is useless to depend for our ventilation on what we term the buoyant properties of warm air. We have a horror of draughts; and warm air, without them, has no buoyant property at all. Indeed, it is probable, as we have shewn, that the draughts, if we submit to them, only chill the air in the room as well as ourselves, and put the carbonic acid into a more condensed form, instead of removing it.

Any system of ventilation, to be perfectly satisfactory, must provide for the certain removal of the air as quickly as it is rendered impure; and also for the admission of pure air to supply its place, at such a temperature and in such a manner that it will be no source of annoyance. Let this be accomplished, and we may then draw our curtains, and have our doors carefully fitted, without doing ourselves harm. As it is, the draughts which make us shiver and give us cold are, in most cases, the only means which we have of driving out a deadly foe.

In the first place, we say that a satisfactory system of ventilation must provide for the certain removal of the air as quickly as it is rendered

impure. This, we believe, can only be done by mechanical means. The bees, taught by their marvellous innate wisdom, always adopt such means to get rid of their foul air, and it may be questioned whether we can do better than imitate them. A company of workers is regularly told off to expel the vitiated air by keeping up a continual fanning with their wings; so soon as one drops out of the ranks, another takes his place, and thus the air in the hive is kept always sweet. Probably one mechanical exhauster of some kind—a fan, for instance, driven by clockwork—might suffice for all the rooms in a house, if they were connected by pipes; the result would then be equivalent to a system of drainage, the exhauster in the one case acting as the ‘fall’ does in the other.

Then, provision must be made for a supply of pure air to take the place of that which is removed. In winter, the supply ought to be warmed before it is admitted into the rooms; and perhaps some contrivance by which the incoming air would be allowed to circulate a few times round the lower part of the chimney before its discharge into the rooms would be the simplest means of meeting the requirement. Let the public, however, earnestly demand, and be willing to pay for, an efficient system of ventilation, and ingenuity will doubtless be found to supply it.

One system there is of getting quit of foul air, which might immediately be adopted at a little cost, if people would only be willing to take the trouble which is necessary for keeping it in working order; that is, to purify the air instead of expelling it. Such is Nature's course. She cannot afford to throw away the air which is poisoned day by day; if she had done so, the whole atmosphere would have been abolished long ago; therefore, she has instituted a purifying process which keeps pace exactly with the vitiating process. Trees and plants of all kinds breathe the air as we do, but with a different result: instead of expelling carbonic acid from their leaves, which are their lungs, they transmute the deadly gas, by a mystic alchemy, into woody fibre and green chlorophyll, and return to the air a continual supply of pure oxygen—the very gas which is essential to our life. Truly, they are the most wonderful, as they are the most beautiful, scavengers in God's universe, never tiring of their work, but ever deriving from it new freshness and strength. But for them, the whole atmosphere would speedily be laden with poison, and desolation would reign over the face of the earth. When we imitate Nature, we do well, and no better plan could be adopted for insuring a pure atmosphere than the cultivation of plants and flowers in and around our dwelling-houses. Things of beauty, they will not only prove to be a joy, but a blessing for ever. They will take up the foul air of our rooms with glad haste, and weave it into fairy forms of gorgeous hue, or purge it in their tiny cells, and give it back to us in sweet and life-giving perfumes. The window-gardener, therefore, does something more than gratify his taste for beauty of form and hue; he cultivates friends which will do him more good than physicians, and promotes not only his own pleasure, but the benefit of all who dwell with him. The very herbs of the kitchen-garden are ministers of health, and some of the common old-fashioned but sweet-smelling flowers are amongst the most busy puri-

fiers of the atmosphere which we possess, so that the poorest may avail themselves of their services, and thus secure a continual change of air.

It matters little which of these two systems is adopted—whether we remove or purge the air which we render impure; but let it be remembered that to do neither is to subject ourselves inevitably to loss of energy and health. Pure blood is absolutely essential if we would have a sound mind in a sound body; and pure blood we can never have if we breathe impure air.

DULCIE'S DELUSION.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

THERE was a small room, in a corner of the house, in a side of the square opposite to that in which Mrs O'Connor's pretty and cheerful little apartment was situated. It was an unconsidered, pariah sort of room, with dull, slightly mouldy paper on its walls, a crooked window, and a door-lock of preposterous size and complete inutilty. The window looked into the *cour*; no leaves rustled near it, no birds twittered beneath its narrow leaden rim, no flower-scented air came through it into the gloomy chamber. The furniture was of the scantiest, the simplest, and the least pretty—in fact, it was composed of a selection from the refuse of the house. A dreary carpetless room, but scrupulously neat, and having a few books and meagre adornments, such as an Indian desk and work-box, with uncouth monsters carved in their precious wood, and silver locks of clumsy workmanship, to testify to the tastes and habits of its occupant. In this room, within a week of her little mother's funeral, Dulcie might have been found, still almost bewildered by the suddenness and extent of her calamity, and struggling through mists of grief to discern and deal with the realities of her position. They were very serious, and to a certain extent had been at once dealt with by Madame Dervaux, in reality Dulcie's only friend, though the girl would have hardly dared to call her so, and though she felt towards her none of the impulsive yearning with which the young meet and reward sympathy. Guided by the infamous letter of M. Dejazet, concerning whom and his flight from Paris under most disgraceful circumstances, the doctor, M. Cazin, had been able to give her some interesting particulars, Madame Dervaux had arrived at a rapid comprehension of the state of things, and, for the first time, had gained an insight, by guesswork, into poor Mrs O'Connor's history. Ah, well! It was only another in the long list of improvident marriages which were among the unaccountable *bizarre* customs of England, where *des jeunes personnes* were permitted to entertain sentiments, and to marry without a *dot*, and so their children came to be left beggars, like this poor Mademoiselle Dulcie. With a shrug and a sigh, addressed to the hopeless irrationality of a society which formally tolerated love-matches, Madame Dervaux abandoned the consideration of the abstract question, and made up her mind that she would find out precisely what means Dulcie had, without an hour's delay.

There was no difficulty about this: as soon as the poor girl recovered her senses, she strove with docile earnestness to answer all questions put to her, and attained, by valiant efforts, a

self-command for which Madame Dervaux and the locataires would previously have been far from giving her credit. It was clear that the funeral of the little mother must be conducted on the most economical principles, and that Dulcie's 'friends,' as Irish people call their relatives, must be communicated with. But, to the fulfilment of the latter intention, an insuperable obstacle presented itself. Dulcie knew nothing about her relatives, except that they lived in Ireland, where she had never been, and that she was named after one of them, whom she had never seen. Madame Dervaux had no more correct notions of the geography and nature of foreign countries than her compatriots in general; and the idea of any appeal to the inhabitants of a land yet more distant and unknown than the cold Albion itself, presented insuperable difficulties to her. She was not an unkind woman, but she was eminently practical. She had resolved to act charitably towards Dulcie; but she meant to define the boundaries of that charity strictly, and to keep within them. She had a certain kind of credit to maintain, but she also had interests which must not be injured. Madame Dervaux, in fact, consulted both her head and her heart on this occasion, and contrived to make their counsel agree. Dulcie must at once vacate the apartment she could no longer pay for; and husbanding her small resources as much as possible in the meantime, endeavour to get occupation as a teacher. She could have got better pay, and had at least as easy a life of it, if she would have gone into a shop; but Dulcie could not bring herself to that, not from pride or disdain of the occupation, but because she knew nothing of the business of any kind of shop, and felt she should be taken merely in the ornamental capacity of a decoy. Ignorant and innocent as she was, instinct told her that. So she was to endeavour to procure some pupils, and in the meantime to have the little room, near the roof, to live in, rent-free, until her circumstances should improve. This was the extent to which she proposed to be charitable to her afflicted young locataire; and, if it seems a limited extent, it must be borne in mind that a great many persons in her place would have given Dulcie notice to quit, and seen her depart, with the frightfully small sum which stood between her and destitution, without troubling themselves further about her.

If inaction and leisure be the food of grief, Dulcie's was in a fair way to be starved, for Madame Dervaux took care to cut off supplies of those aliments. She was a bustling, strong woman, to whom physical exertion was easy, and she went about undauntedly to the former *clientèle* of Mrs O'Connor, and canvassed vigorously for pupils for her young protégée. Dulcie was not capable of teaching music as her mother had done; and must needs be content with younger pupils, of a different class, and lower terms. Madame Dervaux conducted her negotiations accordingly, and with such result, that by the time Dulcie had the bodily power to make continuous effort, she had employment prepared for her, for some hours of each day, and was engaged to attend at the convent-school, where she had so lately been a pupil, to teach English and music to the younger girls. There was no mother to come for her now, every afternoon, and take her home—her own day's toil, her own evening's rest, sweetened

by the young girl's presence. A dreadful season of loneliness had set in for Dulcie. When she realised the truth that the responsibility of herself—the daily provision for the daily wants of her own life—had come upon her, she was fairly terrified; and when this feeling was somewhat subdued, when she came to regard her position as one not altogether impossible for her to maintain, the anguish of her desolation seized upon her—the hopeless depression of the knowledge that the life which was to be had only at the cost of toil was not worth the having. The beauty began to fade out of her unsmiling face, and the grace to depart from her drooping figure; and she ceased to be an object of lively interest to the locataires, because she was seldom seen by them, and was not at all amusing. The dullness of look and of spirits which comes, when the worker is young, of very hard work, without any particular hope or prospect to help and inspire, began to settle down upon Dulcie.

How did she live? There was only one person who could have answered that question, had there been any one to ask it. But there was not. Madame Dervaux made no inquiries. Perhaps she had expected a spontaneous confidence on Dulcie's part, in return for the undeniable services she had done her—expected that the girl's gratitude would have taken the form of friendship. Perhaps she was deterred by a secret consciousness that these services had fallen short of what she ought to have done—she, with an unnumbered and sufficient income—for a motherless creature, so little fitted to face the difficulties and the solitude of her lot. However this may have been, it is a fact that she did not take any further active interest in Dulcie, and that she never invited her (the change to the little room looking into the cour once made) to cross the threshold of her own spacious and comfortable apartment, *au premier*. As for Dulcie, it never occurred to her that her silence was closing a friendly heart against her. A great bewilderment had come upon her, and she had no power of calculating the effect of any mood of hers. She shrank from every one; her mind was as closely wrapped up as her fair face in the long thick veil which is the French symbol of deep mourning, and as her graceful form in its plain, cheap, black garments. She had been so accustomed to the unheeded services of love, that she hardly recognised such as were inspired by other motives; and when she thought of them, they oppressed her—they almost frightened her.

Madame Constant knew more about Dulcie, at this time of her life, than anybody in the world knew, for the orphan girl could not avoid some contact with her, and the honest *conciierge* had always liked her, but especially since circumstances had borne out her warning, and justified her advice with relation to Mrs O'Connor. She knew how hard and cheerless the poor child's life was—how devoid of every trifling pleasure and indulgence which is so much to youth. Dulcie's little room had no kitchen allotted to it, and the small ugly stove would have been a poor resource, even had Dulcie had the least notion of cooking her own food. But she had no such notion, and would have been badly off indeed without the kind and ready help of Madame Constant, who made her little purchases for her, and took care that when she came in, weary, after her day's teaching, there was some

estable food prepared for her. She could have told how little of that food her protégée ate, and with how utter a want of appetite; how slender was the breakfast which preceded the day's work; and how the long evenings were passed in solitary study, too often chequered by tears. She could have told how Dulcie, who could not afford a fire, lay on her bed all the winter evenings, wrapped in blankets, with a jar of hot water at her feet, and read by the coarse light of the paraffine lamp which used to light the little passage to the apartment once her mother's, now very differently occupied. She could have told of the chilly spring mornings, when the girl sat working at the window with its dull outlook, repairing, with busy fingers, the clothing which she had not the means to renew; for her earnings were of humble amount, let her work ever so hard. And it was fortunate for her that to look nice and neat was a necessity of her position, or the care for her appearance, which generally survives even the most serious trouble, when the sufferer is young and pretty, might have died in Dulcie.

Those things Madame Constant might have told, but not the girl's sorrow—not the questioning and straining of her mind—not the heavy depression, sometimes nearing despair, sometimes routed by the fanciful dreamings in which she indulged, until, awakening from her reverie with a start, she found the reality colder and bleaker than before.

The locataires, who had lost almost sight of Dulcie, were indemnified by the occupation and amusement which her successor afforded them. This was an English lady, of austere presence and middle age, who had been highly recommended to Madame Dervaux. Her name was Miranda Prinsep, and her reasons for locating herself in the quaint house in the distant *faubourg* were as follows:

'I require,' she said to Madame Dervaux, 'quiet, tidiness, and respectability *inside the gates*. When I want to see the gaiety and the wickedness of Paris, I can go and see them among my friends, but I don't choose to see them always. I don't mind the place being dull. Of course, any place where one associates at all with one's fellow-mortals, and where they are all women, must be dull, but it may also be orderly. You can't have tidiness where there are men. Tanneries are wholesome. It is out of the way for my friends, no doubt; but when I want them, I can go to *them*.'

Madame Dervaux was glad of the tenant, and quite indifferent to the explanation. All English women were eccentric. Miss Miranda Prinsep was only a little more eccentric than others. With her, cleanliness was a passion; neatness a mania. She made of her cheerful apartment, where the little mother had passed so many industrious days, a sort of private mosque, at whose entrance she not only took off her shoes, but compelled her visitors to take off theirs likewise. Order indeed reigned within those precincts—order of the most severe and practical kind; and Madame Constant, who aided the trim little maid, trained up from her infancy in the inflexible ways of Miss Miranda's household rule, in some of her heavier tasks, had no gentler appellation for the English locataire than that of 'old tigress.'

'She sits and watches the poor little Susanne like a cat watching a mouse,' said Madame Constant, describing the new inmate of the dear old

rooms to Dulcie. 'It is enough to give one the fever just to see her green old eyes twinkling with watchfulness. Is there a tiny thread of cobweb in this corner? Is there a pinch of dust, just a streak, in that? Does this chair-back shine less brightly? Can she see her droll old head less clearly in the stove this morning? Quick! Susanne shall be scolded for half an hour, and have something taken from her dinner. Bon Dieu, what those English *bonnes* will bear! The tigress bought her from a school where children are sold to people who want servants who cannot get away from them—a house of work they call the school. Ah, Mademoiselle, what a sad thing, and how shocking a country England must be! Your dear little mother did well to come to France. This morning, the little Susanne has a misfortune. She is sweeping very high up the wall, farther than she can stretch without standing on her toes, to take away some dust which is not there at all, but only in the imagination of the tigress, and her foot slips, and she falls against a chair. The chair falls, and is broken, just a little; but Susanne is hurt. Then the tigress scolds her, and tells her she shall have bread and coffee for her dinner, and no more; and Susanne cries, not for her scolding, but because her head is hurt. And I say: "Mon Dieu! Madame, is it the fault of Susanne? She would not break Madame's chair with intention; her heart is too good." "I know nothing about her heart," says the tigress, "but I do know about her stomach, and therefore I punish her stomach." And she orders Susanne away; and me—I am too glad to quit her.'

Chiefly by means of Madame Constant, and assisted by her own odd ways, a prejudice against Miss Miranda Prinsep sprung up among the locataires, succeeding to the curiosity with which they had at first regarded her. She troubled herself very little about them or their opinions, and was as reserved about herself as Mrs O'Connor had been, only with this difference, that the reserve of the little mother had been timid, whereas hers was brusque. They could not even find out whether Miss Miranda was rich; though, as she was very economical and exceedingly dictatorial, and never known to give anything away, it seemed probable. She had friends, it appeared, who did not find the quaint old house in the distant *faubourg* too far away, and who came to see her with a constancy which argued either that there was something to be liked under Miss Miranda's odd exterior, or—as Madame Constant interpreted it—that these friends were candidates for the *heritage* of the tigress.

Dulcie knew nothing of Miss Miranda. She had seen her occasionally, as she went out in the morning to her daily duties, returning from the flower-market, accompanied by the subdued Susanne, whose British appellation was Susan Cooke, and received a grim nod if the meeting occurred within the gate of their common domicile. But if she encountered the young girl outside that privileged boundary, Miss Miranda took no notice of her. She was antipathetic to Dulcie in proportion as she was unlike the little mother, whom, it seemed to the girl, her grim figure and forbidding ways had dispossessed. Miss Miranda had not deigned to make many inquiries about the humble tenant of the little room looking into the *cour*; but, hearing from Madame Dervaux the story of her predecessor's death, she had expressed some angry contempt for her feebleness of mind. The idea of

dying of a shock, when she had a child to life for! and that shock caused by the dishonesty of a man! One would hear of people dying of the shock of seeing the sun rise, or set, next, Miss Miranda supposed. Wherefore Madame Dervaux concluded that Miss Miranda had met with some unscrupulous persons of the male sex in her time; and also that she was of a tough and uncompromising disposition.

One evening, after the dreary winter was past, and when the wonderful beauty of the spring as it is in Paris, was stealing over the face of the earth, when Dulcie sat longer by her window, and did not wrap herself up in her blankets any more, Miss Miranda Prinsep spoke to Madame Constant about her—spoke in her brusque way, and in her most uncouth French, to the following purpose. Miss O'Connor was in the habit of giving music-lessons, was it not so? Miss Prinsep was fond of music, but not a proficient. There was a piano in her *salon*, and if Miss O'Connor had any disengaged time in the evenings, she would pay her the same sum as for a music-lesson, to come and play to her for an hour.

This message, contemptuously transmitted by Madame Constant, who described the tigress' manner as more than usually tigerish, caused Dulcie to burst into a flood of the bitterest tears she had wept for some time. That she should be asked to enter her dead mother's rooms, to make music for a stranger, and one so rude and pitiless, for money! It was unheard of. She refused, and Madame Constant carried back the refusal, in the curtest terms, though she knew that Dulcie's means were at a very low ebb indeed, and that the privations of her life were many and severe. Miss Miranda received the reply with much indignation, and thenceforth conceived a decided prejudice against Dulcie, so that she even discontinued the nod with which she had previously acknowledged her presence inside the gate.

'If there is one thing more detestable to me in a woman than disorderly habits—and they, I am convinced, are sure indications of vice—it is sentimentality.' Thus did Miss Miranda express herself to a lady who was calling upon her within a week after poor Dulcie's misdemeanour. The lady was a fresh, fair, matronly person, the picture of kindness, good-humour, and happiness, with a well-to-do look about herself and her dress, the latter being in the extreme of British bad taste.

'I cannot say I like anything of the kind,' replied the lady.

'No, my dear; you always had good sense. Sentimentality of the doleful order, too, and setting reason and propriety at defiance! I need not trouble you, or waste our time, with the particulars, but they so disgusted me that I made up my mind not to recommend the girl I had mentioned to you. I had made a plan for forming my judgment of her abilities and disposition, and then, if I found her desirable, we could have arranged for the dear children. But it would not do, it would not do at all. I don't want Tiny and Effie to be taught tomfoolery, and to whine over withered flowers and dead canary-birds. We know what comes of that sort of thing; when young people ought to be settled in life, they invariably want to marry the wrong men, and object to the right ones.'

'And so I must look elsewhere,' said the lady.

'Yes, indeed, Lady Dulcimer, you must. There are plenty of rational young women to be found, I have no doubt, one of whom would be only too glad to be governess to your little girls; and I'll help you to find her.'

REVERENCE IN LOVE

No song of mine can e'er express
One half thy mystic loveliness;
No words can tell
The quiet beauty, gentle grace,
That beam unsullied on the face
I know so well.

Dark eyes that peep so kindly forth,
Fit emblem of the spirit's worth
That shines within;
No gloomy passions linger there
To dim their purity—no care,
No thought of sin.

No pretty, plaything beauty she;
No jewelled type of vanity;
No worldling child!
For she, the child of nature born,
By nature beautified, may scorn
The gold-beguiled.

Some may not see her beauty—they
Would find a gem, and think it clay—
May smile that I
Should love, revere her, deem it meet
To linger humbly at her feet,
And thankful die.

I love to hear her speak—she knows
Her nobler mind; what God bestows,
She will not hide;
But gently still, that none may dare
To mock the joys they cannot share,
And call it pride.

I love to hear her sing; her voice
Would make the loneliest heart rejoice;
It gladdens mine;
No lark could trill a song so gay;
No nightingale so sweet a lay,
Nor so divine.

Maybe 'twould pain her to despise
A lover in this humble guise;
I bear my lot;
I feel her presence in the air,
I know an angel has been there,
And murmur not.

Though now, perchance, for aye we part,
Her form is printed on my heart;
I still can pray;
Who knows but He will hear, and shed
Unnumbered blessings on her head
From day to day!